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ABSTRACT

The performance of 35 students with low and medium reading scores who took a reading and study skills course at a community college was compared with that of 27 students who had similar reading skills (as judged on a standardized test) but who did not take the reading course. Comparisons were made in the areas of the number of semester hours each group completed, the number of students who returned the semester following the reading course, and the grade point averages of each group. A significant difference was shown between low reading skill students who took the course and low reading skills students who did not take the course in terms of number of semester hours completed during the semester the course was offered. On no other comparison did any reliable difference occur between students who took the course and students who did not take the course. (TJ)

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Factors Demonstrating Effectiveness of Reading 100

Study by: Florence Goldman

Purpose:

In the past two years, the importance of taking the Longview Reading Class has been documented by examining student improvement from pretest to postest on the Nelson Denny Reading Test. Most students have doubled their reading rate and have increased their reading comprehension and vocabulary. Since study skills as well as reading improvement are emphasized there might be additional factors to demonstrate the effectiveness of this course. If students adequately implement study skills concepts and improved reading habits they should become more flexible and efficient in their use of time for reading and studying and in turn should meet with more success in completion of other course work at Longview Community College.

Factors which completion of this reading course might affect are (1) attitude toward college courses, (2) motivation to do assigned work in courses and (3) skills necessary to get a higher grade point average. These factors would certainly influence the successful completion of the courses taken and would in addition enchance the student's desire to enroll for additional course work.

The importance of Reading 100 in relationship to some of the above factors will be demonstrated in this study. If would be very valuable to Longview Community College to help enrolled students be successful in school and also continue to attend college.

Unfortunately most high schools do not teach study skills such as listening, note taking, test taking, studying, etc. Students are not exposed to courses which teach them to be flexible in their reading habits. Even the brightest students have not learned to make the most efficient use of their study and reading habits. The latter point is of special importance since the majority of Longview students work and or have other time demanding responsibilities in addition to their school work.

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If a student needs one fact from an article, he/she should be able to scan the article at a very high speed, and find this one fact. Most students have not learned to use any speed reading techniques and therefore read all material regardless of their purpose in reading at the same slow pace.

When study time is limited being able to utilize speed reading techniques may mean the difference between success and failure in a given course. Applying adequate study skills would certainly help the student feel that he or she had the know how to do college work. Over and over students have asked the question, "Why didn't we learn this before?" Although it is unfortunate that this information and that these skills were not learned earlier, these deficits should be overcome so that students may utilize their college courses to help them reach their goals, rather than having them be overwhelmed and undermined by confused and inefficient study and reading methods.

This research was undertaken to determine the effect of completion of the reading course, Reading 100 on semester hours completed, reenrollment in college and grade point average.

Procedure:

The majority of students take a placement test before entering Longview Community College. The test used is the Comparative Guidance and Placement Program of the College Entrance Examination Board. This test includes a reading subtest. If a student scores 19 or below on this reading subtest the members of the Longview Counseling Department recommend to this student that he/she take a reading course, Reading 100. Students scoring above 19 and students who have not taken the screening test may also elect to take this course.

Twenty-one students who had been recommended to take the reading class and who successfully completed it during the Fall semester 1976 were placed in the Low Reading Class Category for purposes of this study.

Twenty students who were recommended to take the reading class and elected not to were selected to be in the Low Non Reading Class Category and served as the control group.

Fourteen students who had scored 20-29 on the reading subtest and who successfully completed the reading course were placed in the Middle Reading Class Category for purposes of this study. Seven students who scored 20-29 on the reading subtest and had not taken the reading class were selected to be in the Middle Non Reading Class Category and were the controls for the Reading Class Category.

Since only 3 students who completed the reading class had scored above 30 on the reading screening test, a contemplated high category was eliminated.

Questions:

The questions to be answered in this study using the four categories (Low Reading Class, Low Non Reading Class, Middle Reading Class, Middle Non Reading Class) are listed below.

1. Compare the semester hours completed by the Low Reading Calss Category with the semester hours completed by the Low Non Reading Class Category (Fall semester 1976 and Spring semester 1977).

Compare the semester hours completed by the Middle Reading Class Category with the

semester hours completed by the Middle Non Reading Class Category (Fall semester 1976 and spring semester 1977).

2. Do more students in the Low Reading Class Category return to school Spring 1977 or do more students in the Low Non Reading Class Category return to school in the Spring?

Do more students in the Middle Reading Class Category return to school for a second semester or do more students in the Middle Non Reading Class Category return for a second semester?

3. Is there a difference between the grade point average of students in the Low Reading Class Category and the grade point average of the students in the Low Non Reading Class Category (Fall 1976 and Spring 1977)?

Is there a difference between the grade point average of students in the Middle Reading Class Category and the grade point average of the students in the Middle Non Reading Class Category (Fall 1976 and Spring 1977)?

Results:

Table 1a presents the mean semester hours completed by the Low Reading Class Category and the Low Non Reading Class Category for Fall 1976 and Spring 1977. During the Fall semester 1976 the Low reading Class Category completed a mean of 11.428 semester hours and the Low Non Reading Class Category completed a mean of 4.3 semester hours (t=5.91, $p<.001$).

Thus reliable results are obtained showing that close to three times as many semester hours were completed by the Low Reading Class Category. During the Spring semester 1977 students in the Low Reading Class Category completed a mean of 5.904 semester hours and those in the Low Non Reading Class Category completed a mean of 3.65 semester hours (t=1.322, $p>.10$). The results show that the students who took the reading class completed more hours, however the results have a high probability of occurring by chance and are not reliable.

Table 1a

Mean Semester Hours Completed by Low Reading Class and Low Non Reading Class Students for Fall 1976 and Spring 1977

	Low Reading Class	Low Non Reading Class
Fall 1976	11.428	4.3
Spring 1977	5.904	3.65

Table 1b shows that students in the Middle Reading Class Category completed a mean of 10.357 semester hours and those in the Middle Non Reading Class Category completed a mean of 10.714 semester hours during Fall 1976 (t=.872, p>.30). These results have a high probability of occuring by chance and are not reliable. In Spring 1977 students in the Middle Reading Class Category completed a mean of 10.3 semester hours and those in the Middle Non Reading Class Category completed a mean of 12 semester hours (t=.716, p>.40). These results are not reliable.

Table 1b

Mean Semester Hours Completed by Middle Reading Class and Middle Non Reading Class Students for Fall 1976 and Spring 1977

	Middle Reading Class	Middle Non Reading Class
Fall 1976	10.357	10.714
Spring 1977	10.3	12

Table 2a indicated that 81% of the students in the Low Reading Class Category registered for the Spring semester 1977 while only 40% of the students in the Low Non Reading Class Category registered (X^2=5.601, p<.02). Over twice as many students in the Low Reading Class Category returned to school for a second remester. These results are fairly reliable and have a low probability of occurring by chance.

Table 2a

Low Reading Class and Low Non Reading Class Students

Who Did or Did Not Register for Spring 1977

	Low Reading Class	Low Non Reading Class
Registered	17 (81%)	8 (40%)
Did Not Register	4 (19%)	12 (60%)

Table 2b shows that 71% of the Middle Reading Class students registered for the Spring semester 1977 and 86% of the Middle Non Reading Class Students registered ($\underline{X}^2$=.032, $\underline{p}$>.80). These results are not reliable.

Table 2b

Middle Reading Class and Middle Non Reading Class

Students Who Did or Did Not Register for Spring 1977

	Middle Reading Class	Middle Non Reading Class
Registered	10 (71%)	6 (86%)
Did Not Register	4 (29%)	1 (14%)

Table 3a presents a 2.237 mean grade point average for students in the Low Reading Class Category and a 2.628 mean grade point average for students in the Low Non Reading Class Category ($\underline{t}$=1.492, $\underline{p}$>.10) during the Fall Semester 1976. In Spring 1977 the mean grade point average for students in the Low Reading Class Category is 2.204 and the mean grade point average for students in the Low Non Reading Class Category is 2.486 (t=.726, p>.40). The above results are not reliable.

Table 3a

Mean Grade Point Average for Low Reading Class

Students and Low Non Reading Class Students

In Fall 1976 and Spring 1977

	Low Reading Class	Low Non Reading Class
Fall 1976	2.237	2.628
Spring 1977	2.204	2.486

Table 3b indicates that Middle Reading Class students obtained a 2.377 mean grade point average for Fall 1976 (t=.519, p>.70). In Spring 1977 Middle Reading Class Students had a 1.990 grade point average and Middle Non Reading Class Students received a 2.305 grade point average (t=1.287, p>.30). These results are not reliable.

Table 3b

Mean Grade Point Average for Middle Reading Class Students and Middle Non Reading Class Students In Fall 1976 and Spring 1977

	Middle Reading Class	Middle Non Reading Class
Fall 1976	2.377	2.202
Spring 1977	1.990	2.305

Discussion:

The results indicate that the students who initially score 19 or under on the reading subtest of the entrance examination and who complete Reading 100 finish almost three times the number of semester hours as students in the same category who do not take this course. Also twice as many students in the Low Reading Class Category enroll for a second semester. This demonstrates that at least for this group Reading 100 is a definite asset to the students' success in college. Also this class is important to Longview Community College in that students who might become drop outs remain in school.

Additional data should be collected at the end of 1977-1978 to see if the results for the Low Categories would be replicated. Also this would add to the data for the Middle Categories which currently do not have enough students to make the results of the analyses conclusive. If there are enough students in Reading 100 to form a High Experimental Category, it would be interesting to examine the effect of the course on these students.

Because of the W grade at Longview the grade point average is probably not as effective a measure of success as are semester hours completed, i.e. a student who does well in one course and receives a W in three other classes may achieve a higher grade point average than a student who does equally well in that some class and passes the three others with a lower grade. It should be noted that there is little difference between the mean grade point average for the Low and Middle Categories.

In conclusion this study indicates that completion of Reading 100 helps students who score low on the reading screening test successfully finish courses and perhaps in turn this success motivates them to return to college for a second semester.